

2026.09.08

**5.5 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding the outcomes of the trial of free entry into the Jersey Museum (OQ.71/2026).**

Further to the Minister's response to Written Question 136/2026 regarding the trial of free entry into the Jersey Museum, will the Minister advise whether he has had the opportunity to evaluate the outcomes of the trial and what his position is in relation to continuation of free entry; and if he has not yet undertaken this work, when will he do so, given the Museum's importance to the visitor economy?

**Deputy F.G. Voisin of St. Helier North (The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development):**

Since I responded to the Written Question in July, my focus has been on identifying how we are going to grow our economy and wider Council of Ministers commitments. I have not had the opportunity to evaluate the outcome of the trial. The Deputy will be aware that I have recently delegated functions for arts, culture and heritage to my Assistant Minister, Senator Kersten. I have asked her to liaise with Jersey Heritage to review the effectiveness of the free trial. I am confident that she will be able to recommend whether the trial restarts in due course.

**5.5.1 Deputy M. Tadier:**

First of all, can I also acknowledge that there has been a new appointment and congratulate Senator Kersten? I was really not sure who was going to answer the question this morning, but I am sure there will be a collaborative approach from the Ministry. Could the Minister clarify what the policy position is? Because while Jersey Heritage have run the trial, and I did hear on the radio this morning they think it has been a success from their point of view, that ultimately if we compare our situation in Jersey to the U.K. (United Kingdom), where there is a government policy that says national museums should, as a principle, be free to enter, does Government of Jersey have a policy principle and what considerations would it be underpinned by if it did?

**Deputy F.G. Voisin:**

I think there are a couple of things here. First of all this was a trial, and a trial by its implication has a start date and a finish date, and I understand that the trial finished at the end of Q1 of this year. As far as a policy for encouraging visitors to visit our museum, of course this is all part of our visitor economy, and I do acknowledge that in 2025 the number of visits to Jersey Museum increased by about 34 per cent. But it is also interesting that visits to the Maritime Museum in Mont Orgueil also fell, which would have also had an impact on the revenue of the museum service. I think the thing is that the cost of the trial is about £500,000 a year, and it is a question of how best we are going to spend or allocate the resources of the one per cent funding that has been agreed by this Assembly.

**5.5.2 Connétable I. Gardiner of St. Helier:**

I look forward to see the outcome of the evaluation. Would the Minister advise when he is expecting to get the evaluation before the Budget debate to ensure that we can have a discussion if this type of policy would benefit visitor economy and before we will go into the Budget debate?

**Deputy F.G. Voisin:**

We have certainly got to agree the budget with all of the recipients of the Art, Culture and Heritage Fund. So that will be in the fourth quarter of this year. I would hope that it will be before the Budget debate.

**5.5.3 The Connétable of St. Helier:**

The Minister mentioned about a trial. I would like to check if the evaluation measure the wider benefit to town, including footfall for nearby businesses or only museums on admission?

**Deputy F.G. Voisin:**

The data we have is just for museums.

#### **5.5.4 Deputy C.S. Alves of St. Helier Central:**

I think I was probably one of the last school cohorts of pupils who benefited from the flashcard back in the day where we were able to visit a wide range of heritage sites for free. Can the Minister tell me what is his position with regards to maybe having a look at bringing that back for children specifically, and has he done any comparisons with other countries? For example, I know in Portugal that the museums are free every Sunday.

#### **Deputy F.G. Voisin:**

No, as I said earlier we have not done the evaluation, and obviously any evaluation can certainly include looking at a flashcard system. I was not aware of that, so thank you for letting me know about it. And also what happens in other countries, so we can bring that in as part of the evaluation.

#### **5.5.5 Deputy C.S. Alves:**

Is the Minister aware of what the K.P.I.s (key performance indicators) for this trial were, please?

#### **Deputy F.G. Voisin:**

I understand it was visitor numbers, but we also wanted an understanding of how the museum service translated that increase in numbers into increased revenues from other sources.

#### **5.5.6 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour:**

While I am interested in the visitor economy and the K.P.I.s around that, I am also interested in local children and whether they can access our local culture. I would be really interested to understand whether those K.P.I.s included measuring the number of local children visiting our museum. I also remember that scheme. Are there any K.P.I.s that measure the impact for our local children?

#### **Deputy F.G. Voisin:**

I am sorry, my briefing papers do not cover the K.P.I. figures and whether they include entrants from children. All the information that I have is for local people attending and tourists, but this is something we can certainly look into as part of the review.

#### **5.5.7 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:**

That is great to hear that the Minister is open to that. Would he be open to perhaps extending the trial in a slightly different format? Indeed a previous questioner gave some ideas there, perhaps a flashcard that allowed children one entry to each of the sites per year would make a huge difference to their cultural experience if their families cannot afford those memberships.

#### **Deputy F.G. Voisin:**

The trial has come to an end, so it is a question of restarting it on new parameters.

#### **5.5.8 Deputy M. Tadier:**

From my understanding, the trial was supposed to be a year and it lasted 2 years and it sounds like no measurement has meaningfully been taken. Does the Minister agree that he risks putting the cart before the horse and the first thing that his department needs to do is establish its policy on free entry to Jersey's National Museum?

[10:30]

And if the agreement that everybody should be able to access our National Museum for free, whether they are a visitor, a child or a local family which has grown up, that everything else should follow from that and it should not be simply a haggling argument between his department and Jersey Heritage, does he agree that it is valuable to establish that policy first or does he have a different opinion?

#### **Deputy F.G. Voisin:**

I can certainly take that on board but I do think that an important part of this is, I am afraid, and I am sorry to say this, the financial element and whether we encourage free access to our museums for everyone. There is, as I said earlier on, a cost of about £500,000 for this, and it is a question of whether

that is the best way to spend that money. I think the other issues of free entry for our youth is a separate issue, and certainly is important to discuss, but I think that also ... we have been talking about free entry to the Jersey museum, we have not been talking about free entry to all of our other museums in the Island.